

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (original) A connecting unit, which includes a journal provided with at least two stops with a joint area arranged between the stops and a counter element cooperating with one of the stops of the journal,
wherein the counter element includes a recess for the joint area of the journal and a wedge-formed outer contour, which is formed by outer surfaces of the counter element oriented perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the journal when the journal and counter element are joined together in an appropriate manner.
2. (original) A connecting unit in accordance with claim 1, characterized in that the recess of the counter element includes a wedge shaped taper in the direction of the decreasing thickness of the wedge shaped outer contour and the joint area of the journal is wedge shape formed compatible to the recess of the contour element.
3. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of claims 1 through 2, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the joint area of the journal is formed by the grooves located in the journal.
4. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of claims 1 through 3, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the journal includes a head and a shaft.
5. (original) A connecting unit in accordance with claim 4, characterized in that one of the radial oriented side surfaces of the grooves forms one stop and the head of the journal forms the other stop.
6. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of claims 3 through 5, characterized in that~~ claim 3, wherein the base surfaces of

the grooves run parallel to the longitudinal axis of the journal and run wedge like relative to one another.

7. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of claims 3 through 6, characterized in that~~ claim 3, wherein at least two grooves are located in the journal.
8. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of claims 3 through 7, characterized in that~~ claim 3, wherein the grooves lie opposite to one another.
9. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of claims 3 through 8, characterized in that~~ claim 3, wherein the side surfaces of the grooves running in the radial direction are at a right angle with the longitudinal axis of the journal in the tangential direction.
10. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of claims 3 through 8, characterized in that~~ claim 3, wherein the side surfaces of the grooves running in the radial direction are sloped relative to a plane at the wedge angle of the wedge shaped outer contour of the counter element, which is perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the journal.
11. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of claims 1 through 10, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the recess of the counter element is formed through a wedge shaped notch.
12. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of claims 1 through 10, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the recess of the counter element is formed by a wedge like tapered through hole in the counter element that extends perpendicular to the insertion direction.
13. (original) A connecting unit in accordance with claim 12, characterized in that the recess is formed by two circular through holes

that are spaced from one another and a wedge shaped area that is connected with one of the through openings.

14. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of claims 1 through 13, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the connecting unit includes a balance element.
15. (original) A connecting unit in accordance with claim 14, characterized in that the balance element is locatable on the journal next to the counter element.
16. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of claims 14 or 15, characterized in that~~ claim 14, wherein the balance element includes a wedge shaped outer contour.
17. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of claims 14 through 16, characterized in that~~ claim 14, wherein the wedge angle of the balance element corresponds to the wedge angle of the counter element.
18. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of claims 14 through 17, characterized in that~~ claim 14, wherein the wedge slope of the balance element is opposite to the wedge slope of the contour element.
19. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of claims 1 through 18, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the contour element includes two wedge shaped elements with opposing slopes.
20. (original) A connecting unit in accordance with claim 19, characterized in that the wedge shaped elements of the counter element are linearly displaceable relative to one another.

21. (original) A connecting unit in accordance with claim 19, characterized in that the wedge-shaped elements of the counter element are skewable relative to one another.
22. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of the previous claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the connecting unit includes balance elements for the customization of the clamping length that lie between the stops of the journal to different dimensions of the to be connected components.
23. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of the previous claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the connecting unit includes a safety element, for example a rubber plug, for securing the contour element on the journal.
24. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one of the previous claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the journal includes two joint areas separated from one another.
25. (original) A connecting unit in accordance with claim 24, characterized in that at least one counter element is locatable on each of the joint areas.
26. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one or more of the previous claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the journal, counter element, spacer element and/or balance element are made from a substantially metallic material.
27. (currently amended) A connecting unit in accordance with ~~one or more of the previous claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the journal, counter element, spacer element and/or balance element are made from a substantially plastic material.